

# The Augusta Pulse

Fall 2006

For the employees and friends of the Augusta VA Medical Center

[www.va.gov/augusta](http://www.va.gov/augusta)

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**CRNA Training  
Program**

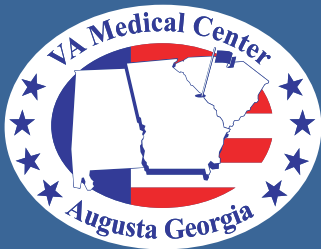
**Employee  
Enhancement Group**

**New Athens Clinic**

**A Special Donation**







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The Augusta Pulse is published quarterly for the employees, volunteers, partners and friends of the Augusta VA Medical Center. To submit articles or story ideas for possible publication, contact Janice Kennedy, (706) 823-1733 or via e-mail at Janice.Kennedy@va.gov.

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Janet Spanton, Student Nurse  
Anesthetist, and supervisor Robert  
Lloyd, MSN, CRNA, Program  
Director

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## Director's Message

*It is with great pride that I share with you my plans to retire at the end of this year. I want to thank each of you for giving me the most enjoyable time of my career and to highlight just a few of the many accomplishments you have allowed me to be a part of during the last five years. These accomplishments include, the first Active Duty Rehabilitation Unit in the Veterans Health Care System, totally remodeling both inpatient and outpatient Spinal Cord Injury spaces, improving the physical appearance of both divisions including special projects for dementia and long term care patients, and changing signs and improving way finding.*



*Together, we have opened the Athens Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) and have the Aiken CBOC on the horizon. We moved Primary Care to the Uptown Division and improved our opportunity to use valuable clinical space at both divisions for planned expanded patient care activities. We have been reviewed and visited by the Inspector General, General Accounting Office, Joint Commission on the Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO), Council on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF), the Army Surgeon General, National Service Officers and many others, too numerous to mention. The consistent theme of these visits has been the friendliness and helpful attitude of our employees. Amazing what a friendly attitude and being focused on our mission does for our medical center and the positive image that others have of us.*

*I just want to express how proud I feel having been a part of Augusta's transformation for the future. Remember, we can't change anything from the past but we can sure make a positive impact on the future. Thank you for the opportunity.*

James F. Trusley III



Downtown Division



Uptown Division



*Employee Enhancement Group members, standing left to right: Suzanne Kenrick, Denise Whitten, Linda Payne, Stephanie Davis, Sherri Smith, Sheila Hamlett, Jean Yarsawich, Leon Easley, Tom Harris; seated left to right: Dora Chaplin, Ed Shepherd, Tyra Lightfoot-Obryant, Erica Williams, Ronnie Armistad, Jim Whetzel*

Created in 1991, the Employee Enhancement Group (EEG) was designed to provide programs for employees that would express appreciation, enhance the work environment, and increase morale. Now, 15 years later, the EEG has re-invented itself, incorporating new members and creative activities with some tried and true ideas from the past. Through a renewed commitment this energetic and dedicated group of employees works to help the Augusta VA succeed in its goal to become the employer and health care provider of choice.

The EEG has had a busy year, sponsoring such activities as the Employee Holiday Dance at Fort Gordon, ice cream breaks, and the ever popular lunch fish fry and hotdog sales. The most ambitious endeavor was the first VA Family/Homecoming Day held at the Uptown Division picnic pavilion on August 5. Approximately 700 people attended, including 50 retirees. Thanks to VA

Canteen Profit Sharing, there was no charge to participants for the delicious meal of BBQ ribs, grilled hamburgers, hotdogs, and watermelon. All the picnic food was specially prepared by volunteer employees from Nutrition and Food Service. The children of employees eagerly played on the three inflatable attractions provided by the VAH Federal Credit Union, and were amused by members of Georgialina Clown Alley. This lively group of clowns entertained, painted faces and created balloon animals. There were also several game booths which provided children an opportunity to win school supplies. The adults were not left out of the fun, employees and their families had numerous opportunities to win prizes totaling over \$700. These gifts were provided through a consolidated effort of the Employee Enhancement Group,

VA Canteen, and VA Employees Association. The success of this event has confirmed what the EEG suspected, Augusta VA employees not only work hard for our nation's veterans, but enjoy a time to relax and play together as well. Plans are already underway to make this an annual event.

Membership to the group is open to all VA employees, with supervisory approval. If you would like to be a part of this energetic team of employees, contact Denise Whitten, EEG Chairperson, extension 7393.







# CRNA Training Program

## Promotes Succession Planning in a Critical Area

*Betty Winger, CRNA with student nurse anesthetist Jean Ellis*

***“I will be a VA employee for life because of the opportunities that the VA has given me.”***

***-Henry Wright, Nurse Anesthetist Student***

Making sure the future of the Augusta VA Medical Center is in good hands is an important issue these days. One significant way the VA is working to make this happen and at the same time provide nurses the opportunity to develop their careers, is through a resourceful and comprehensive nurse anesthetist training program. This program not only ensures a future generation of highly qualified nurse anesthetists, but provides an avenue for nurses to pursue a new career path and move into a field that offers growth and self development. Nurse anesthetists have their roots in the 1800's, when nurses first gave anesthesia to wounded soldiers on the battlefields of the Civil War. Today, Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNAs) are master's prepared Advanced Practice Nurses who enjoy a high degree of autonomy and professional respect. Nurse anesthetists serve as a compliment to physicians in the operating room, and because they are skilled to administer anesthesia, but do not command the same salary

as Anesthesiologists, provide a cost savings to health care facilities. According to the American Association of Nurse Anesthetist (AANA), nurse anesthetists administer close to 65% of the anesthesia administered to patients every year. They are the sole anesthesia providers in two-thirds of all rural hospitals, and the main provider of anesthesia for the men and women serving in the U.S. Armed Forces. Among the nation's CRNAs, 51% are women and 49% are men. Nurse anesthetists are a vital component for high functioning health care facilities.

The Department of Veterans Affairs nurse anesthetist training program was initiated in 2003, after a decision was made at the highest levels of the Department of Defense and Department of Veterans Affairs to collaborate and share resources. To be accepted into the training program, nurses must be employees of VA and at a minimum have one year of experience within a critical care unit. This ensures experience in critical situations as well as being involved in the one-to-one care that is typical of a critical care environment. Potential students must apply and be accepted into the University of Texas at Houston Anesthesia



Training Program and by the U.S. Army Graduate Program in Anesthesia Training. The students then complete 12 months of intensive class work making them well versed in the theory and knowledge of anesthesia. The training for this portion of the program is completed in San Antonio, Texas at Fort Sam Houston where the Academy of Health Sciences is located. It is there that students gain a foundation and in-depth knowledge of anesthesia and its role in the medical field. Once the classroom work has been completed the students come to the Augusta VA to complete the 18 months of required clinical training. This training is similar to a physician going through their residency training. While in the clinical training aspect of the program, the students are required to do a certain number of cases in several different departments. They also complete a research project as part of their

program requirements. This year's research project, "The Effect of a Single Dose of Kava on Emergence Time from General Anesthesia Following an Abdominal Surgical Procedure in the Male Sprague Dawley Rat", has been presented at the Annual Texas Anesthetist Conference as well as the National Anesthetist Convention in Cleveland, Ohio. Presenting this project at the national convention is a great honor. The students will also spend some time doing rotations at Fort Gordon and Fort Stewart. The U.S. Army Graduate Program in Anesthesia Nursing is a well respected and intensive training program which ensures that once these nurses graduate, the hospital employing them will get an outstanding and highly educated nurse anesthetist. Currently this program is ranked second in the country out of 90 programs.

Lee Winger, Jr., MSN, CRNA, was responsible for getting the nurse anesthetist program started at the Augusta VA. Mr. Winger served as the Deputy Director of Anesthesia for VA Central Office until his retirement in early September. Robert Lloyd, MSN, CRNA, has now assumed the local program director responsibilities. Mr. Lloyd, with assistance from Betty Winger, CRNA, supervises the students as well as assisting with their rotations and providing a source of knowledge and support.

There are currently two classes of student nurse anesthetists doing the clinical component of their training at Augusta. The newest class of four student nurse anesthetists arrived in July and is scheduled to graduate the program in December 2008. The senior class comprised of three students will graduate in December 2007. Upon graduation, the students are contractually obligated to give three years of service to a VA Medical Center.

Janelle Romm, a student from the new class of trainees, spoke highly of the classroom training with the Army and Air Force Nurse Anesthetists. "There was a special camaraderie with that group and it really helped us to understand some of the language and processes that the Armed Forces use and deal with. It also helped us to get a better understanding of the patient population that we serve." Her feelings were shared by Julia Sullivan, who stated, "...because the training program was in conjunction with the Armed Forces program the classroom training was really intense and prepared us better than most programs."

If you would like to learn more about the VA nurse anesthetist training program visit the web site at <http://www.anesthesia.med.va.gov/anesthesia>.



*Left to right: Student Nurse Anesthetists Janet Spanton, Heather Joe, Julie Sullivan, Jean Ellis, Janelle Romm, Henry Wright and Program Director, Robert Lloyd, CRNA*



# 2006 Combined Federal Campaign

CFC kick-off celebration was held on Monday, September 18 at the Uptown Division. The theme, “Every One of Us can be the Miracle”, was the focus of this year’s campaign, scheduled through October 30.

The goal this year was \$105,000 with at least 60% employee participation. Joyce Coleman, Associate Director for Patient/Nursing Services was our CFC Chairperson and Dr. David Rivera, Chief of Surgery Service, served as the Co-Chairperson.



The mission of the CFC is to support and promote good will through a voluntary program that is employee-focused, cost-efficient and effective in providing all federal employees the opportunity to improve the quality of life for others. The Augusta VA staff are known for taking ownership of this mission and supporting CFC agencies.

## The Road to Magnet Status

### *Nursing's STRENGTH...*

*...is a workforce that provides safe, effective, efficient and compassionate care to our nation's heroes. Focusing on Eight Keys to Excellence is the KEY to success.*

Nursing Services held their first annual Nursing Strategic Planning session in August. Forty participants from nursing leadership gathered to spend the day learning, sharing, planning and even having a little fun. A large portion of the time was given to creating a well thought-out Nursing Service Philosophy, which is still being finalized. Augusta VA nurses want to be sure to capture the essence of all the levels and complexities of nursing in the mission, vision and philosophy.

Strategic planning information sessions included topics on the Augusta Falls Program, Safe Movement and Repositioning Training (SMART), Hand-off or Pamper policy, Nursing recruitment and retention, Value in New Employees Seminars (VINES), and upcoming cultural changes in the Nursing Home Care Unit.

Nursing Shared Governance Council memberships were announced, which is the initial step in the journey to Magnet Status. Councils will focus on the following: developing and implementing policies to improve communication and customer service; developing and implementing policies and procedures related to nursing practice, standards of care and issues of clinical concern; ensuring compliance with regulatory standards and data management; and developing strategies to provide oversight of workforce initiatives. Focusing on employee satisfaction, well being, recruitment, retention and professional development will also be a focus.

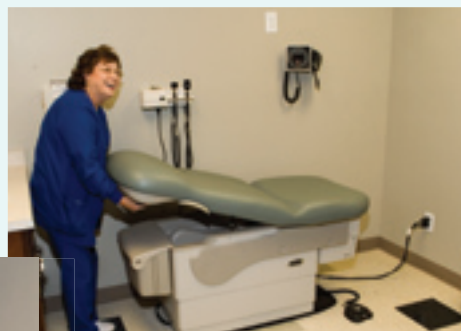
The participants also broke into small workgroups to begin planning the Eight Keys to Excellence for Acute Care, Mental Health & Geriatrics, and Spinal Cord Injury. Drafts were presented at the end of the session and are now being finalized into the Nursing Services Strategic Plan. In successful Magnet Hospitals it becomes apparent that major efforts of retooling the organization, effectively streamlining its management function, creating more effective outcomes and focusing on issues of importance to the staff are vital. On August 9, nursing leadership made a commitment to nurses to follow the resulting plan and roadmap to lead the Augusta VA Nursing Services on the journey to Magnet Status.



An outpatient clinic in Athens, Georgia is now a reality. As of September 26, veterans no longer have to make the two hour drive to Atlanta or Augusta VA Medical Centers for their health care services. The clinic, located in Madison County off Highway 29, is just across the Clarke County line and twelve minutes from downtown Athens. This Athens Community Based Outreach Clinic (CBOC) occupies a beautiful medical building with ample parking and a sheltered area for patient pick-up and drop-off. This clinic provides veterans in Athens and the surrounding area with convenient access to outpatient care, preventative health and education services,

various medical screenings and referrals to specialized programs and inpatient services available at the Augusta VA Medical Center. The clinic, approaching 5,200 square feet, will serve a great need while the process of acquiring a permanent space is in progress.

*To contact the Athens Clinic please call (706) 227-4534.*



*Top: Audrey Noone, RN, prepares treatment room; bottom: Sam Brown and Wade Richardson unload computer equipment*



*Members of the Athens CBOC Activation Team standing left to right: Pam Jones, Wayne Thomas, Bob Webster, Mike Ostrow, Kim Foss, Rosalie Bell, Maribeth Bredehoft-Veidt, Bob Gibbs, Nicki Glover, Priscilla Bazil, Robin Ball, and Linda Dailey; seated left to right: Bob Snow, Chuck Wright, Erica Williams, and David Yarbrough.*





# *A Special Gift from One of Our Own*

Alan Perano, Lead Medical Technician in the Augusta VAMC Gastroenterology Department is also a U.S. Air Force Reservist. He serves as a member of the Aero Medical Evacuation Squadron, Charleston Air Force Base and serves as an Aeromedical Evacuation Technician (EMT-Paramedic). His duties include air lifting the wounded and sick from any area of operation. Alan flies with a team of medical personnel taking care of sick and wounded (military and civilians).

Alan has been deployed three times since September 11 – Afghanistan (Operation Enduring Freedom), Kuwait, Jordan and Iraq (Operation Iraqi Freedom). Some of the combat wounded evacuated from Balad, Iraq came to the Augusta VAMC for care. His crew also flew Bob Woodard from Iraq to Germany after the reporter and his crew were hit by an Improvised Explosive Device.

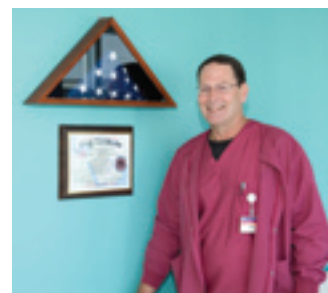
Alan returned to the Augusta VAMC on July 10 after flying 31 combat missions from Balad to Ramstine, Germany. He brought with him the American Flag that was flown in Iraq and in the transport plane evacuating wounded personnel. This flag was presented to James Trusley, Medical Center



*Aero Medical Evacuation Transport Plane with American flag now located on Active Duty Rehabilitation Unit*

Director, during a Town Hall meeting. The flag was framed and is now hanging in the Active Duty Rehabilitation Unit.

Alan sates, "I am so proud to be employed at one of the finest VA Medical Centers in the world."



*Alan Perano shown here during deployment and back home with the American flag he donated to Augusta VA*

## **Audrey Fisher Visits Hospitalized Active Duty Personnel**

On August 15, Audrey Fisher, Trustee, Fisher House Foundation, Inc. toured the U.S. Army Southeast Regional Medical Command and VA Southeast Network Active Duty Rehabilitation Unit, located at the Augusta VA Medical Center. Mrs. Fisher was accompanied by two other members of the Fisher House Foundation and eight representatives from Delta Airlines. In addition to the tour, the guests visited with the active duty patients and provided them with a special catered lunch. This visit was scheduled in conjunction with Mrs. Fisher's visit to the Fisher House located at Ft.



*Audrey Fisher of the Fisher House Foundation, visits with active duty patients during her tour of the Augusta VAMC Active Duty Rehabilitation Unit.*

Gordon. The Ft. Gordon Fisher House is utilized by many of the families of active duty personnel being treated at the Augusta VA.



# EMPLOYEE WELLNESS NEWS



Want to get into shape, lose weight and feel great? If the answer is yes, the Employee Wellness Program at the Augusta VA might just be the answer. This comprehensive health and wellness initiative provides employees and volunteers with opportunities to improve their lifestyle through healthy eating and exercise in the company of friends and co-workers.

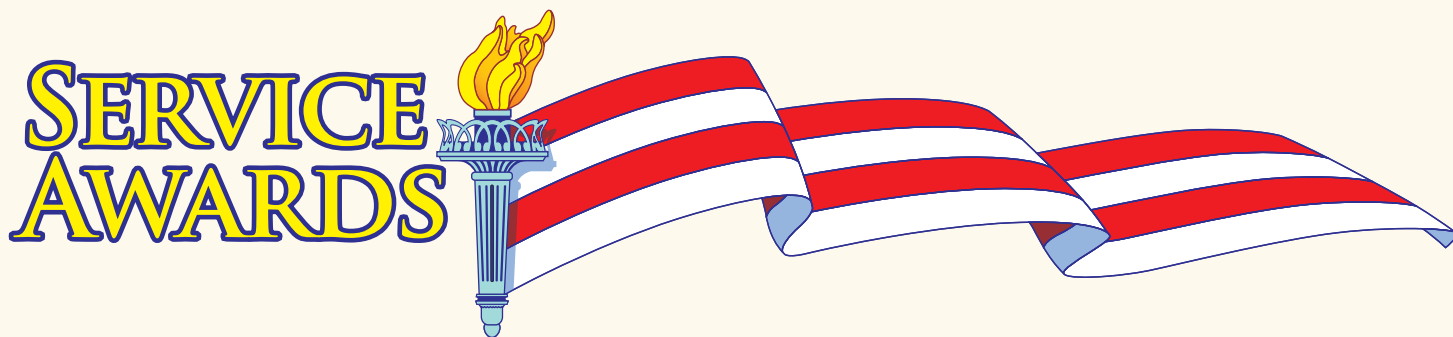
Located at the Uptown Division, the Employee Wellness Center is available to all employees and volunteers Monday through Thursday 4:00 p.m.- 8:30 a.m. and Friday from 4:00 p.m. through Monday at 8:30 a.m. Once oriented to the area by an Employee Wellness Committee member, the employee has access to a variety of cardiovascular and weight training equipment. In addition to the Wellness Center, the Employee Wellness Program also offers employees an aerobics/exercise class twice per week, free of charge.

The Employee Wellness web page on the Augusta VAMC Home Page includes links to health related web sites, health and wellness tips of the week, Employee Wellness programming information, and information on community resources that offer special or reduced rates for employees.

The local Employee Wellness Committee is a component of the VISN 7 Employee Wellness Sub-council. As part of this sub-council, the Augusta committee is dedicated to sponsoring a quarterly wellness newsletter, monthly health and wellness V-tel programs, and other special wellness related activities. In the Spring of 2006, 153 employees participated in a VISN 7 sponsored walking program, "Around the VISN in 80 Days". This 80 day program required employees to log in their exercise activities on the "Around the VISN in 80 Days" webpage. A total of 11,005 miles were logged in by the Augusta employees. The top two walkers for Augusta were Sandra Owens (592 miles) and Jason Pattillo (455 miles).

Currently the Employee Wellness Committee is working toward establishing an additional Wellness Center at the Downtown Division and hopes to have it available before the end of 2006. The committee is also planning exciting new initiatives for 2007 that will hopefully motivate more employees to adopt a healthier lifestyle.

*Stay tuned!*



## EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH:

**Joan Mims**  
(August)

**Barbara Bluford**  
(September)  
**Angela Betts**  
(October)

## STAR TRECC AWARDS:

**Dr. William Moretz**  
(August)

**Rena A. Lee**  
(September)  
**Betty Jiles**  
(October)

The following employees have reached a special milestone in their years of government service during the months of August, September & October:

**40 Year Service Award:**  
George L. Sneed

**35 Year Service Awards:**  
Leroy P. Byrd  
Willie J. Carey  
Judith E. Daggett  
Sue M. Heath  
Dosker L. Howze  
Louis Ivey  
Moses Wilcher

**30 Year Service Awards**  
Prince A. Burley, Jr.  
Rebecca J. Farren  
Susan R. Ferrando  
Douglas R. Gantt  
Catherine F. Johnson  
Eleanor L. Jones  
Gloria M. Lawrence  
Jesse R. LeClair  
Dwight W. Richmond

Bobby G. Roundtree  
Steven D. Sharpe  
Stanley L. Tucker  
Mary E. Veidt  
Sharon J. Wagner  
Debra B. Wiggins  
Glen A. Windley  
Cynthia G. Woodard

### 25 Year Service Awards

Patricia J. Barton  
Patricia C. Bible  
Robert P. Cassingham  
Gwendolyn D. Ferris  
Luvenia J. Gavin  
Salina M. Hedgepeth  
Jerry Jones  
William A. Kingsberry  
Patricia A. Marston  
Estrellita E. Mitchell  
Karen B. Naylor  
Rosalind F. Scott  
Janice Lee Turner  
Joan E. Walker

### 20 Year Service Awards

Claudia K. Alexander  
Peggy A. Broadwater  
Earnestine H. Daggett  
Leslie W. Daly  
Jacquelyn E J English  
Cynthia A. Gerrard  
Dianne L. Gladd  
Willie Hammond, Jr.  
Elease Hansbro  
Kim L. Holmes  
Kenneth O. Martin  
Georgia L. Moore  
Michael L. Ostrow  
Patsy Y. Puczkowski  
Patrick C. Simmons

### 15 Year Service Awards

Richard S. Boggan  
Annette D. Clark  
Christopher W. Harper  
Carlos M. Isales  
Charles R. Johnson  
William A. Johnson, Jr.  
Raymond Kostromin

Charles H. Schofield  
Patricia T. Slusher  
Elizabeth M. Watkins  
Tom Wells, Jr.  
Brenda L. White  
Pamela J. Williams  
Rose C. Wright

### 10 Year Service Awards

Barbara F. Benson  
Cathy M. Billiter  
Lori L. Brumfield  
Lydia M. Hewlett  
Kimberly C. Hoge  
Richard C. Jeffries  
Jozette R. Jones  
Claudia A. McCloud  
Michael A. Pannell  
Whitney J. Verdery-Page

### New Department Chiefs



**Vijay Kumar, PH.D.**, has been appointed Associate Chief of Staff for Research & Development. Dr. Kumar obtained his Ph.D. in 1990 from the University of Georgia and worked as a post-doctoral fellow at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota. His primary research interest is in prostate cancer.



**Chaplain Ron Craddock** was selected as the new Chief, Chaplain Department. Chaplain Craddock received a Master of Divinity Degree from Southeastern Baptist theological Seminary, Wake Forest, NC in December 1986. His military service includes: four year tour of duty in the U.S. Air Force as a Firefighter at Eglin Air Force Base, FL; commissioned on active duty in the U.S. Navy assigned to the Third Force Service Support Group, Fleet Marine Forces, Okinawa; Naval Air Station Cecil Field, Jacksonville, FL; USS Dale, Mayport, FL; U.S. Coast Guard, USCG Training Center, Cape May, NJ; Submarine Squadron Support Unit, Norfolk, VA; Joint Forces Staff College, Norfolk, VA; deployed to Bagram, Afghanistan during Operation Anaconda and Kuwait in support of Operation Enduring Freedom; USS Theodore Roosevelt, Norfolk, VA (4 days after his arrival, it was ordered into action in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom).



# Pulse Points

## Quality of Care Update

Facts about Diabetes\*:

- ✿ In the United States, approximately 18.2 million people have diabetes (6.3% of the population) – 13 million diagnosed, 5.2 million undiagnosed.
- ✿ For the age group 60 years and older, 18.3% have diabetes.
- ✿ Diabetes was the 6th leading cause of death listed on U.S. death certificates in 2000.
- ✿ Diabetes is likely to be underreported as a cause of death.
- ✿ Common complication of diabetes are heart disease and stroke, high blood pressure, blindness, and kidney disease.

How are we doing (FY07 results)?

- ✿ 86% of diabetics have HgbA1c of 9 or less (good control).
- ✿ 90% of diabetics have blood pressure less than 160/100.
- ✿ 83% of diabetics have LDL-C less than 120.
- ✿ 91% of diabetics had timely retinal exams.

\*Information from CDC's National Diabetes Fact Sheet.

## Did You Know?

High cholesterol is one of the principle risk factors for heart disease. Studies have shown cholesterol control to be especially critical for those who have suffered a first heart attack.

For FY2006, 73.7% of patients at VAMC Augusta met the measure requiring an LDL-c less than 100 and having a full lipid panel completed within the past two years.

The best reported non-VA practice for this same measure 54.3%. (Source: The State of Healthcare Quality 2005, NCQA)

For a related measure, only 11.8% of VAMC Augusta patients had an LDL-c greater than or equal to 120. The VA goal for this measure is to not exceed 14%.

## Check it out!

Preventive care saves lives! The American Cancer Society predicts that, for 2006, there will be over 106,000 new cases of colon cancer with over 55,000 deaths, over 214,000 new cases of breast with over 41,000 deaths and over 9,000 new cases of cervical cancer with an estimated 3,700 deaths. Cancer screening is a key component of preventive healthcare in the VA. Check out the results of screening at the VAMC Augusta for FY2006.

	VAMC Augusta	Best Reported Non-VA Practice*
Colorectal Cancer Screening	83.1	52.6
Breast Cancer Screening	86.4	73.4
Cervical Cancer Screening	86.0	80.9

\*Source: The State of Healthcare Quality 2005, NCQA

## Know the Patient Safety Goals!!

- ✿ *Improve the accuracy of patient identification.*
- ✿ *Improve the effectiveness of communications among caregivers.*
- ✿ *Improve the safety of using medications.*
- ✿ *Reduce the risk of health care-associated infections.*
- ✿ *Accurately and completely reconcile medications across the continuum of care.*
- ✿ *Reduce the risk of patient harm resulting from falls.*
- ✿ *Encourage patients' active involvement in their own care as a patient care strategy.*
- ✿ *The organization identifies safety risks inherent in its patient population.*

*Note: These goals are the 2007 goals for hospitals as defined by JCAHO.*



Mr. Trusley,

Below are excerpts from a patient panel held during the closing general session of the recent VA eHealth University (VeHU) Conference in Nashville, TN. I thought you would like hearing what was said about the Augusta VA.

“One more thing I want to add before I let you folks get on to other things. When I first started going to the VA for problems and stuff, the care wasn’t all that great in the VA hospitals at the time. Anyway, over the years I have been to many VA’s and I’ll tell you what, I now live in Augusta and they have two big VA hospitals. They are great hospitals. The care is excellent. I had an HMO when I was in California, which I thought was great, but I’ll tell you what, the VA over there in Augusta beats the heck out of them.”

CB

Dear Mr. Trusley,

I am writing this letter on behalf of our son, who was a patient in your Uptown Division. While a patient, my son received treatment for a traumatic brain injury. We want to write and commend several of your rehab people who worked over and beyond to help my son regain some of his life back. First, Todd Rheins, Physical Therapist, worked with such kindness and understanding, but also motivated my son far beyond what he thought he could do. Todd never gave up and in turn my son did not give up on himself. Secondly, Joe Soparas, Physician Assistant, treated my son with such respect that it caused him to regain some of his lost sense of self. Joe always listened and took seriously our concerns. We will be eternally grateful to Dr. Lindsey who tested our son to see if he could read. It was discovered that he had expressive aphasia. From that point on, his recovery shifted and the speech therapist was able to work with our son both orally and on the computer and now he can speak simple words and at times, whole sentences. He now has a computer where he can express himself and thereby improve his quality of life. Dr. Lindsey is a rare find and a jewel in the crown of the VA. Because she took time to care and act on behalf of a patient, his life is better. Lastly, we would like to commend Mr. Andy Davis, Social Worker Supervisor, who was able to pull it all together and make things happen. He was always available to answer any questions and concerns we might have and keep things moving and together for all of us.

We want to thank these people who went above and beyond to help and because of them our son’s life is improving. The experience at the Augusta VA was positive and the care that our son received was terrific.

ST and DB  
(parents)

VISN 7 internet website is  
now available for staff and  
veterans at:  
<http://www.southeast.va.gov>

